On Bohmit, the Heretic

1. The Saracen leader Bohmit [Muhammad], an evil and false prophet, came from one of the tribes of Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

2. This Ishmael was born of a slave woman, and was called the father of all – [his] offspring. He sired two sons, Mudar and Rabia. Mudar fathered Kusar, Kaniton, Aphmian, Sadon and a number of others, unknown by name. They inherited the Midian desert and ate their livestock, while living in tents. There are also internal, i.e. more distant [factions], not from their tribe, but from the House of Nectar, called Homerites {i.e. Amanites}.

3. Because the aforementioned Muhammad was poor, he had to hire himself [to work] for a rich woman, a relative of his, called Digana, to trade on camels with his brethren in Egypt and Palestine. Later, as he gradually grew bolder, he deceived the widowed woman and married her. When he stayed in Palestine and met Jews and Christians, he picked up some words from their writings. He also suffered from a paralysis of the mind – he would fall [in the attacks of epilepsy]. His wife was upset about it. She [regretted] that although she came from a prominent family and was rich, she bound herself to such a man: not only poor, but also of a paralyzed mind. Having understood that, he said to her: "I see a terrible vision, an angel named Gabriel, and when I cannot bear that vision, I lose my strength and fall."

4. A woman believed it when an Arian, who falsely claimed to be a monk for his own benefit, gave a false testimony about him. He was even more misled by him. And so the woman, having been deceived, talked to other women of her tribe and told them that he [Muhammad] was a prophet. She deceived them, and so the lie reached a man, the prince of that tribe, named Bubahara.

5. [Later] Muhammad's wife died, having made him the owner and heir of his estate. And from then on, he was rich and famous, and the evil lie of his heresy swept over the lands of Epherib [Yathrib].

6. He was a hate-filled satanic murderer. He had disputes with the Jews and with the Christians, that is, with the Arians and the Nestorians, and he took much from them all: from the Jews – monotheism, from the Arians – [the idea of] the created Word and Spirit, and from the Nestorians – anthropolatry. And by creating his own faith, he stirred up all those people. And he taught them to circumcise men and women, to worship only one God, to worship Christ as the Word of God, and not as a Son, born through the Holy Ghost. He commanded that the Word and the Holy Ghost be regarded as something spoken and spilled in the air, and not as co-hypostatic [beings], co-existing with [their] Parent. The Holy Virgin Mary should not be called the Mother of God, but should be considered the sister of Aaron and Moses. He [Muhammad] also taught

them not to baptize, not to celebrate Saturdays, not to observe the customs laid down in the Law and in the Gospel, but to turn away from the cross and believe that the crucified Christ was a *shadow*. Those [so] taught, having completely rejected the law, did not partake of pork and did not drink wine at all.

7. With such slander, [Muhammad] created the truth about himself. He said he was the key-holder of Paradise. For this reason, on the day of Judgment, after Moses appears with the Israelites, they will be brought to the torment and fire as offenders against the law. Then Jesus will appear, denying before God: "I never said I was the Son of God." And the Christians – because they dare to add God and the Son of God to the name of Christ and to teach about the Incarnate Word and the Crucified – will be brought to the fires of Gehenna. And [Muhammad] said of himself that he [would] be considered by God to be extremely pious, and that because of him all their people had become pious – they would be worthy of praise. And for that reason, he will be the key-holder of Paradise. And when he opens Paradise, only 70,000 [men] will enter it with him, those who will dare to do so. The others – he says – will be judged. The righteous will truly and continuously partake of sweetness, and the sinners who find themselves there, should have parchments tied around their necks to enter Paradise and call themselves disciples of God and Muhammad. And there are, he said, three rivers in Paradise, one of honey, one of milk, and one of wine. And each one of those men will have the right to draw from them and drink his fill. Women will be with them, they will have their hair elaborately decorated and they will please them in every way possible. Their bodies [will be] loved with pleasure and full of lust, and in the midst of debauchery he [will be] a slave to sin.

"Jews and Christians will be trees in fire and remain, and the Samaritans," [Muhammad] said, "for the sake of the dung they excrete, must leave Paradise so that they do not bring their stink into Paradise." For everyone who lives here [i.e. in this world], either in wealth or in poverty and infamy, will be there [i.e. in Paradise] in the same condition.

8. This dark adversary of God also spoke of the abomination that God is responsible for every good and evil. Evildoers, poisoners and all those caught at any prohibited activity must be publicly killed. That is what he wrote, and earlier he said: "This is to be so." And he wanted them to die that way.

9. One may be much surprised – as much as one wants – that a creature so blasphemous, measly and contrived, and even [being] the pinnacle of stupidity and beastliness, even now acquires slaves, who consider him unreasonably to be strong and divine faith! And they are completely blinded [to see] the true faith, holy and given by God. Confused and foolish, they follow the self-proclaimed ritual and the liar's inventions. The wretches are attracted to cruelty, lies, *promiscuity,* impure pride and evil heresy, and do not incline the ear to the blessed and saving words {from God}. For they have renounced the true God, of whom the Law and the

Prophets openly teach, and having joined in with the one that openly rages against the Divine, they are very eager to follow diabolic deeds and the extremely contrived, devilish manner.

10. For which God-inspired scripture foretold this ungodly and poisonous [for human souls] Muhammad? Or which God-pleasing prophet called him a teacher of piety? Let them say, then, without any holy inspiration or teaching: how can they, so eager to recognize and receive the prophets who are from Adam to [the birth of] Christ, reject directly Christ and God they proclaim? And the wicked sinner, whom they neither call nor foretell, [can they] consider the last of the prophets, the teacher of true faith and the benefactor, [and even] make him God – the ungodly and without a righteous name?

11. Let them be asked, those who are merciless and angry, about the *abominations* he has spoken ungodly and devilishly, and let them tell us how they relate to the words of God. God's Word clearly teaches and clearly states that God really is not guilty of any evil, and man has a free will in the matter of his salvation or condemnation. And this thrice-wretched and cursed, obstinate enemy of God and man, acting under the influence of the ugly and deceiving devil, boldly proclaims – in a language unrestrained by will and in a thoughtless speech – that God is fully responsible for good and evil. This gibberish-speaking sinner announced that whatever happens to man, whether it is because of Satanic temptation, his own laziness, or misfortune, happens on God's initiative. [Muhammad] *does not* command the avoidance of wealth, modest thoughts, the renunciation of a pleasurable lifestyle, and not repaying evil with evil. [He recognizes] wealth, pride, love for all the pleasures of wealth, and fiercely attacking the attackers as a salvation for the soul and the way to paradise.

12. Oh, what foolishness and madness, contempt- and laugh- [worthy], of the poisoner and the murderer, and what pernicious madness of those who have been lured by him to evil and who are deceived to this day! For they – uniquely sinful, *beastly,* and completely shameless – do not understand at all what evil, dark abyss and devilish perdition they were thrown into and completely plunged into; to what extent they are stuck in homes deprived of the opportunity to flee and leave, and on what paths, difficult to pass through and disastrous for the soul, deceived and miserably captured, and finally perished! For this reason, one should be surprised at their foolishness and insensitivity: walking quickly, they consider themselves reasonable, and not understand the weakness of [their] empty lie. For they – stupid and distasteful – should understand that their [teachings] about the resurrection form an unclean web, which assumes that they receive visible and perishable [i.e. material] food and drink in that life. From these words stems the necessity of being a slave of decay and death. For by accepting food and drink it is not possible to exist as a transformed being, completely decay-free and immortal. And where, then, is the hope for eternal and immaterial life proper to those who believe in God's scriptures?

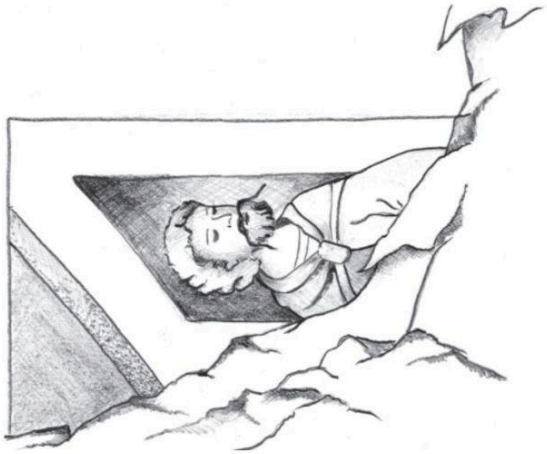
13. They should also understand, those foolish and unfortunate, that they have never to this day renounced their past and ungodly errors, but by dressing in the guise of piety, they secretly serve the idols, not understanding in any way the hidden faith of their devil, deceitful and always harsh, foolish and paralyzed they are. They continue to serve the idols, [the deity] called Aphrodit by the Hellenes, which means ‘delight’, and worship the star, fantasizing that it is the Morning Star, which in their slanderous language they called Habar, which means ‘great’. They continued [to do so] even to the present day and called Aphrodite a goddess.

14. So that it does not appear that we are telling any lies, we reveal here their great mystery: their lousy prayer has such unclean words: ‘adla ua kuvar’. This translates to: ‘God, God’; we translate ‘au’ as ‘most powerful’; ‘kuar’ as ‘great’, i.e. the moon and Aphrodite. So [the whole] is as follows: ‘God, most powerful god, the great one, that is the moon and Aphrodite, god’. And that is what ‘alla’ added at the end indicates. Since they hide all this behind a lack of knowledge of their own language, they say it only to their brethren [?]. *But they do not want to reveal these things openly* to wise men who have reason because of [fear of] explicit recognition. But having told us about those who are like pigs and know nothing but pleasure and discouragement, the unnoticeably and incurably ill, let us return to the main story.

15. After the death of God-hating Muhammad, a star appeared in the south, called ‘idocit’, which means ‘lance-shaped’, heralding the [reign of the] power of these Arabs. It was for 10 [30] days stretched from the south to the north in the likeness of a lance. That year the Arabs, previously known as Saracens, started the war, leaving Arabia and arrived in large numbers in the vicinity of Damascus. When Baanes and Basilisc, strategists in the East, found out about this, they set out against them. Later, when [their] armies fought, the Christians were severely crushed: because the Greeks were struck by a strong southern wind, they could not look to their enemies, because of the great dust. Thus, they were savagely defeated. Having won, the Saracens came to Damascus with power and strength and took it by storm. Similarly, all the Phoenician territories. They settled there, unclean and disgusting, through the inscrutable verdicts of God.

Source: Zofia Brzozozwska, On Bohmit the Heretic. Portraying Muhammad as One of the Heresiarchs in Medieval Rus’ Literature, *STVDI MEDIEVALI,* SERIE TERZA, Anno LXIII - Fasc. I, 2022, pp. 280-3284.

a. Muhammad with a group of his disciples.
Fragment of a miniature from the manuscript RNL F.IV.151 (f. 677r.).
Drawing: E. Myślińska-Brzozowska



b. Muhammad in the grave.
Fragment of a miniature from the manuscript RNL F.IV.151 (f. 682r).
Drawing: E. Myślińska-Brzozowska